

(vii) To advise on the suitability of financing, partly or wholly, seminars, which maybe organised to discuss identified development problems;

(viii) To build up internal research capacity of the Planning Commission and undertake research studies internally towards this end;

(ix) To coordinate the research and consultancy activities undertaken/sponsored by the different Divisions of the Planning Commission as well as those relevant to planning undertaken/sponsored by other Central Ministries and other agencies;

(x) To coordinate information and data systems of Ministries and different government agencies (including NIC) and utilisation of their data base for Planning and Policy purposes;

(xi) To support development of methodologies for planning exercise at the State and lower levels and promote training in the methodology of decentralised planning; and

(xii) to advise on any other matter relevant or incidental to the discharge of the above functions.

Since all projects are commented upon by independent eminent experts the question of Planning Commission being taken for a ride by the grantee Institutions does not arise.

[Translation]

Open Sale of Wheat

4773. DR. MAHADEEPAK SINGH SHAKYA :
SHRI NITISH KUMAR :

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided to stop the sale of wheat in the open market since April 1, 1997;

(b) if so, whether the present price of wheat in the open market is more as compared to the Central Issue Price declared by the Government;

(c) if so, the Central Issue Price and open market price of wheat; and

(d) the reasons for stopping the sale of the wheat in the open market despite its price being more?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) :
(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As the open sale of wheat from the Central pool has been stopped with effect from 1.4.1997, the question regarding rate of open sale wheat does not arise.

(c) Central Issue Price of wheat for PDS is Rs. 402 per quintal, which is effective upto 31st May, 1997.

(d) Wheat is sold under Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic) subject to its availability after meeting the requirements of PDS/RPDS and other welfare schemes of the Government. Due to limited availability of wheat in the Central Pool, the open sale scheme has been discontinued with effect from 1.4.1997.

[English]

Wheat Crisis

4774. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been invited to the news item captioned "Wheat crisis rooted in Government policies" appearing in the 'Business Standard', New Delhi, dated April 19, 1997;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the steps taken to procure wheat for the Public Distribution System from the Mandis in Punjab and Haryana; and

(d) the buffer stock policy of the Government to meet the cyclical fluctuations in the price of wheat?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) :
(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The news item contains the views of a former Chairman of the Agriculture Price Commission in which he has blamed Government policies for the so-called wheat crisis. It is claimed that the decision to import wheat had induced the farmers to demand a higher Minimum Support Price of foodgrains. Criticising the Government decision to import wheat, he has, *inter-alia*, demanded scrapping of the public distribution system in its present form.

(c) The provisional number of purchase centres being operated by FCI and State Governments Agencies in Punjab and Haryana in the Rabi Marketing Season 1997-98 is 1010 and 429, respectively. All other administrative and financial arrangements have been made as usual to ensure that procurement operations are conducted smoothly. The Government has announced a Central bonus of Rs. 60 per quintal in addition to the Minimum Support Price of Rs. 415 per quintal for wheat sold to